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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON BOLIVIAN PRESIDENT ELECT,
DECEMBER 20, 2005

1. Editorial in Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Herald" titled "Bolivian Irony." "The electoral triumph of the socialist Evo Morales is a hard hit for the traditional groups of power and also for U.S. influences in Latin America."

"This doesn't mean that the coca leader will have a easy path. If he acts responsibly and is capable of managing the economy well it will be possible that he won't have major difficulties with the groups who are against him."

"Another radical leader, Felipe Quispe, said yesterday that with Morales there will be no change and everything will be the same. If he (Morales) wants us to believe him, he has to establish a revolutionary and socialist administration, but he won't do it. This will be another neo-liberal government."

"The most important thing is that the Bolivian people have elected change when they demolished the old structures that were incapable of acting for the benefit of the majority and now they receive their punishment."

2. On 12/20 the Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" published an editorial entitled "If Evo Won." "The triumph of Evo Morales in Bolivia wasn't a surprise, but the fact that he obtained an absolute majority surely is."

"The Venezuelan government declared that not everything that Latin America does is anti-North American, it is a national situation and of patriotic importance to improve the people's conditions."

"It would be difficult for the leftist leader to go through a miraculous transformation into a rightist in order to calm the stressful nerves of businessmen, investors and Washington."

"The North American government has been more concerned about what is happening in Middle East and terrorist threats rather than to focusing their complete attention to this (elections). The biggest concern for Evo Morales will be the internal situation, to create a model that won't deviate from his speech and won't scare away investment."

3. The San Pedro Sula-based liberal daily "Tiempo" ran an editorial entitled "With the Flow." "The Evo Morales' triumph in Bolivia clearly registers as part of the dominant wave claiming social responsibility in Latin America."

"Evo Morales's win is extraordinary in many ways, especially in a country like Bolivia, which historically has had authoritarian governments and since 1982 during its short democratic history, has been marked by convulsion."

"It is obvious that, with such a strong electoral mandate, Evo Morales, unlike his predecessors, will have enough capacity to govern and maneuver in order to undertake the reforms being demanded by the Bolivian people, who are enduring from poverty and social exclusion."

"It is anticipated that the rise of the Socialist Movement (MAS - Movimiento Al Socialismo) to political power, with its charismatic leader Evo Morales, will propel the dynamics of social and economic change even more in Latin America, especially as similar changes are expected in other countries on the continent involved in the electoral process."

4. "Tiempo" ran an op-ed by Raul Cortes entitled "Evo Morales, from peasant to the first Indian president." "Evo Morales, who obtained a great victory, will become the first Indian president of this Andean nation."

"In the 80s he migrated to Chapare in search of opportunities. He was introduced to the coca labor union movement and on Sunday he obtained a firm victory with almost 100percent of the votes."

"The labor union movement gave him a boost into politics and in 1995 he founded the Movement to Socialism (MAS)."

"In 2002 he ran for the presidency for the first time. That candidacy caused his ouster from Congress."

"A punishment that ended as a blessing because that year he won second place in the general elections. He obtained this because of his speech to the Andean people."

"In that moment he had his first disagreement with the U.S. Former U.S. Ambassador Manuel Rocha was against him."

"The U.S. has declared that it would support the next Bolivian administration even if Evo Morales won, but the White House's concern is a loud secret."

"After he voted on Sunday he demanded the U.S. President withdraw its troops from Iraq and the military bases in Latin America."

Ford